

**Faculty Use Only**

, as you further hone your topic on XXXXXX your academic journey, you will want to be cognizant to form a well-defined problem statement on the topic you propose. At some point, you will find the information below helpful in constructing a problem statement given your proposed topic. Know that it is best to stay more broad at first when determining a topic ... the reason is that it is far easier to narrow your topic as you conduct research, rather than vice-versa.

**THE PROBLEM STATEMENT:** Begin with a crystal clear statement of the problem. Formulate the problem into a single sentence. Focus on ensuring the problem has been pinpointed and clearly expressed. By stating the problem condition in one sentence, you may be sure a problem has been appropriately targeted. The problem is something that the research will seek to improve as a result of the dissertation activities. It is long-range. The problem statement will also provide impetus for several goals and multiple project outcomes or objectives. It should include the following three concepts.

- Who is involved in the problem?
- What is precisely wrong?
- How is the wrongness known?

Here are some examples of problem statements – each contains the three elements.

Employee absenteeism rates have increased to an average of 20% per day and productivity has declined by 50% as measured by a review of company personnel and sales records.

Students in grades three, four and five demonstrated consistent difficulty (on average failed to submit homework 3 out of 5 days per week) in organizing and submitting daily and long-term homework assignments as observed and recorded by their classroom teachers on formal school record keeping instruments.

Newly hired professionals (in their first or second year) lack job-task effectiveness, where they were found to exhibit an average of 5/37 competencies on state standards of professional performance as determined by an Employee Competency Survey.

Fifth grade students are reading on a third grade level, lacking the skills of grade appropriate word recognition, as documented by school-given standardized test scores. In the last example, the discrepancy between what is and what should be is two grade levels lag in performance and the evidence is in the test scores. That is the problem.

Dr. E.

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